



FRONT PAGE DIALOGUE: **THE PARIS AGREEMENT**

Human activity has begun to take a significant toll on the earth's weather patterns, increasing temperatures and raising sea levels. If the concentration of greenhouse gasses in our atmosphere continues to rise unabated, human societies will likely suffer as a result of food and water shortages, population displacement and the destruction of cultural and historic resources.

In December 2015, over 190 countries met in Paris at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21). The result was the Paris Agreement, a global accord to confront climate change. The agreement will become legally binding if at least 55 countries – representing at least 55 percent of global greenhouse emissions – adopt its terms into their own legal systems between the next two Earth Days, April 22, 2016 and April 21, 2017. The key goals set forth at the meeting included limiting the global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius (with the hope of keeping it below 1.5 degrees); neutralizing greenhouse gas emissions by the second half of the century; encouraging wealthier nations to support poorer nations through green infrastructure and practices; and monitoring each country's progress toward these goals.

During the Conference, many artists and activists from around the world installed public art pieces to spur awareness and discussion of climate change and environmental policy. Some of those installations are featured in this dialogue.

How to use Front Page Dialogues

Rather than using all the model questions suggested in each phase, facilitators may select questions that reflect the evolving conversation of the group they are guiding in dialogue. Some questions may be useful for multiple topics; we mark these with slashes (ex. race/policing/protest). Finally, we are available to work with you individually as you develop your dialogue session. If you are not familiar with the Arc of Dialogue model, you can contact Sarah Pharaon (spharaon@sitesofconscience.org) or Braden Paynter (bpaynter@sitesofconscience.org) for support and more information.

Guidelines

What are the group agreements or guidelines for the dialogue that help us establish the “container” that the dialogue occurs within? Here are some sample agreements:

1. Use “I” statements. Speak only for yourself.
2. Share the air: leave room for everyone to speak.
3. Our unique backgrounds and social status give us different life experiences.
4. Seek first to understand—ask questions to clarify, not to debate.

Preparation

This dialogue invites participants to view artwork generated for and installed during the United Nations Climate Change Conference as a shared experience from which to begin their conversations. Included in this model are images of the art and commentary on it drawn from various sources. Where possible, we have included quotes from the artists themselves. Print pages 2-6 of this document and hang these images around the dialogue space.



Brandalism

"The United Nations 21st 'Conference of Parties' [United Nations Climate Change Conference] meeting taking place this December is supposed to secure a global agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions to quell the negative impact of climate change. Yet in 20 years of UN climate change talks, global emissions have risen by 63 percent. Increasingly, these talks are dominated by corporate interests. This year's talks in Paris are being held at an airport and sponsored by an airline. Other major polluters include energy companies, car manufacturers and banks. Brandalism aims to creatively expose this corporate greenwashing."

(www.brandalism.org.uk/brandalism-cop21)



(Images from brandalism.org and the BBC)



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..... memory to action

Ice Watch – Olafur Eliasson and Minik Rosing

"Twelve immense blocks of ice, harvested as free-floating icebergs from a fjord outside Nuuk, Greenland, were arranged in clock formation at the Place du Panthéon, where they melted away from December 2-3, 2015, during COP21."

(<http://icewatchparis.com>)





HUMAN ENERGY

Created by artist Yann Toma, HUMAN ENERGY was a large-scale art piece installed under the Eiffel Tower from December 5th to 12th, 2015. Containing bicycles, sports fields and dance floors; participants biked, danced, ran, stretched and played to produce “energy units” tallied on large computer screens onsite. Each night, the accumulated energy lit the Eiffel Tower with the aim of sending the message, “All of us must take action now on climate change”. According to the artist, “Built in 1889 to celebrate the French Revolution, the Eiffel Tower will become during COP21 the beacon of the HUMAN ENERGY revolution.”

<http://www.artcop21.com/events/human-energy/>





Oil Spill at the Louvre – Art Not Oil Coalition and others

“Simultaneously a group of art-activists spilled an oil-like substance in the atrium of the museum. Clad in black clothes and holding black umbrellas, the artists walked barefoot in the “oil spill”, leaving footprints on the marble floor as a symbol of fossil fuel corporations’ influence on museums. Ten participants in the unauthorized indoor performance were arrested by French police.

Beka Economopoulos from the New York-based art-activism collective “Not an Alternative,” one of the organizers of the intervention, said:

“It used to be acceptable for tobacco companies to sponsor cultural institutions. That’s no longer the case. We believe it’s a matter of time before the same is true of fossil fuel companies. When oil companies sponsor the Louvre, the Louvre likewise sponsors those companies – the museum gives these companies cultural capital and their ‘social license to operate.’ On the occasion of the UN Climate Summit in Paris, we’re urging the Louvre to stop sponsoring climate chaos.”

www.artnotoil.org.uk/blog/100s-take-part-protest-performance-louvre-museum-over-oil-sponsorship#sthash.mNBxUDTE.dpuf





Shoes – Avaaz and others

“The government has just announced that our massive Paris People’s Climate March has been cancelled. This is crushing for all of us who have had enough heartbreak already. But the Global Climate Conference is going ahead, and together we can still deliver the magnitude of our call with the biggest symbolic climate action ever at La République on the eve of the summit. As a first action – we’re going to cover the Place and all the surrounding streets, as far the eye can see, with shoes to represent our marching feet. They’ll [sic] be hundreds of thousands of ‘marching shoes’ – a pair for each of us. We may not be able to march, but this massive symbolic act can show how many Parisians are standing together for everything we love. This will be our way of saying terror will not and cannot silence our collective dream of a 100 percent clean, 100 percent united future for ourselves, our children and our planet.”

(https://secure.avaaz.org/en/paris_march_next_steps_/?pv=82&rc=fb)





PHASE I – COMMUNITY BUILDING

Questions in Phase 1 help build the “learning community” and break down barriers by allowing participants to share information about themselves.

What is one word that comes to mind when you hear “climate change?”

Invite participants to move around the space and examine the images in silence. Instruct them to stand near an image they want to talk more about. In small groups they should answer:

What drew you to this piece?

What was your reaction to the Paris climate talks?

Who or what has strongly influenced your understanding of climate change?

PHASE II – SHARING OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

Questions in Phase 2 help participants recognize how their experiences are alike and different and why.

Have you seen the impact of climate change where you live?

What behaviors have you changed because of the impact they had on the environment? What behaviors are you unwilling to change?

What argument for or against addressing climate change do you find most compelling?

Who do you listen to for accurate information about environmental issues?

How has your background influenced the way you think about this?

Where does addressing climate change fall on your list of priorities?

What frustrates you and what excites you about the way the climate talks were covered?

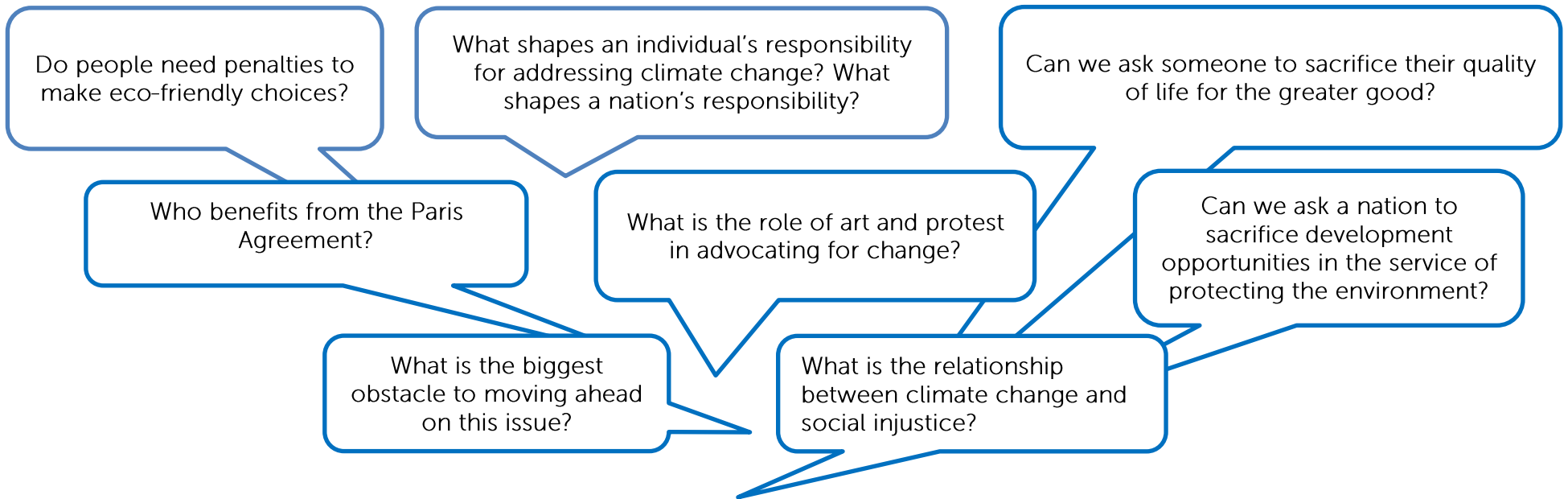
Did the talks accomplish what you hoped for? Is this a good path for us to be on?

Do these pieces inspire hope?



PHASE III – EXPLORING BEYOND OURSELVES

Questions in Phase 3 help participants engage in inquiry and exploration about the dialogue topic in an effort to learn with and from one another.



PHASE IV – SYNTHESIZING THE EXPERIENCE

Questions in Phase 4 help the group to reflect on the dialogue and what they learned.

